

# TRANQUIL TIMES

## The Newsletter of Tranquil Lake Nursery

No. 35

Spring, 2011

### Spring Events & Lectures at Tranquil Lake Nursery

Free and open to the public. For more information, call 508-252-4002 or visit [www.tranquil-lake.com](http://www.tranquil-lake.com)

### Spring Garden Festival Saturday, April 30, 2011 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A fun and educational day filled with workshops and hands-on demonstrations that will help you to hone your gardening skills and improve the beauty of your landscape. (see details on page 3)

### Two Garden Lectures on Saturdays in May

#### 11 a.m. Bring a Lawn Chair

- May 7 What's New in the Garden:  
Perennials & More
- May 21 Foliage Plants with Color,  
Texture and a Long Season  
of Interest

(Descriptions of garden talks are on our website at [www.tranquil-lake.com](http://www.tranquil-lake.com))

### Garden Design Days

#### Saturdays, May 14 & June 4 Sign up for a half hour consult

\$50 reservation fee  
(Redeemable in exchange for plants)  
Reservations first come - first serve

### 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Open House & Summer Garden Festival

Saturday, July 16, 2011

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Free and open to the Public.

## I Dreamed a Nursery

It was **twenty five years ago** when I was a young man of just twenty nine, that I was offered the opportunity to purchase land in Rehoboth and build the nursery of my dreams. In order to make that dream a reality, I teamed up with a co-worker, **Philip Boucher**. Together we built a business plan, secured funding and developed a vision for the future of Tranquil Lake Nursery.

Now, a quarter of a century later, I have a new dream and it involves that same land. In preparing for Phil's impending retirement, I find myself once again building a business plan. This time I am joined in the planning process by the other partner in my life, my wife of twenty years, **Debi Hogan**.

This new plan, if successful, will **protect the 22 acres at Tranquil Lake Nursery** and will also allow us to transition the nursery in a way that gives Phil the retirement he deserves without leaving us with so much debt that it will be impossible to move forward with the business. Quite a challenge, but one we believe we can achieve.

Early in the process, we examined the business aspects of the nursery to determine the viability of each segment and potential for growth. We quickly realized that my garden design and landscape business was by far the healthiest component of the operation, and also independent of the land. The easy solution was to dissolve the business, sell the land and equally divide the profits. Goodbye Tranquil Lake Nursery.

As Debi and I contemplated this future, we also took into account our own personal values and our deep commitment to agriculture, environmental stewardship and habitat protection. We felt very deeply that the nursery property is truly a gem that we could not, and should not, abandon, especially to development. So we looked for other options.

We are now making connections to form a coalition of state and local agencies that are engaged with the issues of open space, farm and environmental preservation, as we work to save the unique qualities of Tranquil Lake Nursery. It is our plan to exchange future development income for agricultural and conservation restrictions that will protect the land forever. Our acreage along the Palmer River's alluvial plain offers excellent, productive and stone-free soil that is well suited to agricultural use. The pristine water of the river is a valuable fishery with native trout and shad. The nursery also offers diverse habitats for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, frogs and more.

We know that many of you, our customers, share our passion for Tranquil Lake and its fields, gardens and open space. You have been telling us your stories and expressing your pleasure for the past twenty-five years. You know that we provide quality in our locally grown plants, education efforts, horticultural advice and design.

If you love the nursery and believe that sustaining local agriculture is important, now is the time to show it by showing up. Tell your friends about Tranquil Lake Nursery and the reasons you think it is extraordinary. We will keep you apprized of our progress. You are a part of our past and also our future.



*A daylily field full of July bloom and the green house at Tranquil Lake Nursery.*

Warren Leach

## Ornamental Fruits for Your Garden

### Bold Textured Foliage

*Sambucus nigra* 'Black Lace'  
*Yucca filamentosa* 'Golden  
Sword'

### Colored Fruit

#### Red

*Aronia arbutifolia*  
*Euonymus carnosus*  
*Fragaria vesca* 'Golden  
Alexandria'  
*Malus* 'Sugar Tyme'  
*Malus* 'Molten Lava'  
*Rosa rugosa*  
*Vaccinium macrocarpon*  
*Viburnum trilobum*

#### Blue

*Amelanchier canadensis*  
*Chionanthus retusus*  
*Juniperus communis*  
*Mahonia bealei*  
*Myrica pensylvanica*  
*Vaccinium angustifolium*  
*Vaccinium corymbosum*  
*Viburnum dentatum*

#### White

*Symphoricarpos albus laevigatus*

#### Purple

*Callicarpa dichotoma*  
*Cotinus coggygria* 'Purpureus'

#### Black

*Aronia melanocarpa*

### Herbs with Sensuous Fragrance

Lemon Verbena  
Lemon Grass  
Sage  
Thyme  
Rosemary

## Integrating Edible Plants into the Ornamental Garden

Integrating edible plants into your home landscape is a fast growing trend, that has become more popular as people have increased their interest in locally grown plants and food. There are a number of garden plants that can provide double duty, offering a delectable harvest to accompany their garden beauty.

Low-bush blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolium*) top my list for favorite versatile ornamental plants that also produce delicious fruit. My esteem for these diminutive eighteen-inch shrubs goes beyond their identification with my home state of Maine. These beauties packs a punch year-round in the garden. Their choice assets range from clusters of bell-like flowers in late spring to the blue-black fruits produced in summer on to the brilliant red fall-foliage color. Red-tinged twigs even add a colorful presence through winter snow.

Low-bush blueberries thrive in full sun and dry soils, spreading by underground stolons, to create a ground covering thicket. The beauty of a quintessential down-east, blueberry barren landscape is an archetype you can adapt to our own landscape. I've planted several "mini barrens" starting with 500 low-bush blueberries spaced two-to-three feet apart. Combine them with other drought tolerant plants such as *Juniperus communis* var. *depressa*, bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) and *Yucca filamentosa* 'Bright Edge' for a tough low maintenance planting.

The year-round ornamental qualities of low-bush blueberry makes for an ideal plant for the entry garden. One of my favorite walkway edge combination is low-bush blueberry and the golden alpine strawberry (*Fragaria vesca* 'Golden Alexandria'). As you step out your front door, you can pick your own breakfast. Alpine strawberries bloom from early summer through to fall frost bearing sweet fruit for five months or more. Add *Sedum* 'Autumn Fire', *Hemerocallis* 'Countess Carrots', *Geranium*

'Rozanne' and *Hellebores* for a sensational garden border.

High-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) plants can be found in many selections and cultivars that are well suited to the home garden as well as commercial production. These large shrubs grow to heights of six feet or more. They are found in the wild from Nova Scotia and Quebec, west to Michigan and south to North Carolina. Unlike their drought tolerant, ground hugging cousins, high-bush blueberries require moist soil in order to thrive. They are also tolerant of partial shade, although full sun produces more flowers and fruit.

The high-bush blueberry is also highly ornamental in the garden; offering attractive form, bark, flowers, fall foliage and large fruit. A mature plant can take on the structure of a small multi-stemmed tree. One blueberry at Blithewold Arboretum in Bristol, RI was exceptional for its extraordinary, reddish exfoliating bark that rivaled *Stewartia monodelpha*. The red, fall-foliage color is spectacular, especially when combined with evergreen members of the Ericaceae family such as mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) and andromeda (*Pieris japonica* 'Dorothy Wyckoff').

Cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) are important as a commercial fruit crop in Massachusetts. They are native from Nova Scotia south to New Jersey and have been long utilized by native peoples. Marketing the health benefits of cranberries has come a long way since Captain John Smith was first introduced to them in 1614.

You don't even need a "bog" or a membership in the Oceanspray Co-op to grow cranberries. They can be planted in the garden to form an ornamental groundcover. They are easily adapted to a damp, sunny area in your garden. The evergreen foliage turns to a beautiful maroon color in winter. I have combined cranberries with *Sedum* 'Angelina'

and *Dirca palustris* to great effect in a raised bog in one of the gardens at Tranquil Lake Nursery.

Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*) is another of my favorite fruiting shrubs for the ornamental landscape. It is a member of the Rosaceae family, and blooms in May with clusters of small, white flowers that are followed by very tart, red fruit. This multi-stemmed shrub has a narrow upright habit that fits nicely into a mixed perennial border. The foliage turns red in fall and the red fruits persist through winter, ignored by birds. Aronia is found in the wild in wet sites but it is tolerant of dry site conditions in sun or partial shade.

The black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) has similar ornamental and cultural characteristics, but produces jet-black fruit. This fruit is usually very tart, however the cultivar 'Viking' has been found to be tasty after a light frost. In fact, Aronia juice may be found on shelves in natural food stores. Along with the fruits of blueberries, and cranberries, aronia has been recognized for its medicinal use. The red, blue or violet plant pigments in the skins of the fruits contain polyphenols which provide a range of health benefits, primarily acting as antioxidants.

Our native Shad tree (*Amelanchier canadensis*) blooms in early spring around the time when the shad migrate upstream. The white flowers are



Hundreds of low-bush blueberries make a blueberry barren as part of this low-maintenance and edible landscape.

followed by sweet blue fruit in June, a favorite of birds. As a child, we called them sugar-plums and competed with the birds for a tasty treat. The shad tree can be grown as a single or multi-trunk small tree. It has beautiful grey bark and orange fall foliage color.

Elderberries (*Sambucus nigra*) have been selected for their distinctive foliage characteristics. The cultivar 'Black Lace' sports dissected purple-black leaves. Both the white flowers and purple fruits are edible. Elderberries prefer moist soil conditions. Combine them with maroon leaved *Heuchera* and hot colored daylilies such as *Hemerocallis* 'Rocket City' or 'Ben Kirk'.

There are many other perennial herbs, shrubs and trees with fragrant leaves and edible fruits and flowers. Seek them out adding edible and ornamental flavor to the many other interesting aspects of your garden. And do consider planting your own Blueberry Barren!

Warren Leach

### Perennial Plant of The Year

The Perennial Plant of the Year for 2011 is *Amsonia hubrichtii*, Arkansas Bluestar. We've been praising this beautiful, but tough, perennial for years. *Amsonia hubrichtii* blooms in early June with blue flowers on stems 18-to-24 inches high. It is the foliage that is most spectacular. Narrow, quill-like leaves radiate from the stems creating a fine textured mound. The foliage remains attractive and green all summer even in the worst droughts. *Amsonia* grows best in full sun and is tolerant of heavy-to-light soils. In late September through October the foliage turns to a golden yellow. It is a great companion for daffodils, daylilies and late blooming asters.

On Sunday, May 1 the Boston Globe will spotlight a spectacular garden, that has been a decade long collaboration between Warren and the owners.

## Spring Garden Festival

Saturday, April 30

10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### Workshop & Demonstrations

- 10:00 Cutting Back, Spring Pruning, and Coppicing Your Trees  
Warren Leach
- 10:30 The Art of Digging and Drum-Lacing a Tree  
Andy Balon & Philip Boucher
- 11:00 Ornamental Trees and Shrubs for a Long Season of Bloom  
Warren Leach
- 11:30 Favorite Daylilies & Their Companion Plants with Bloom from June to September  
Philip Boucher
- 12:00 Wattle and Weaving Garden Fences and Structures  
Andy Balon
- 12:30 Favorite Herbs for Fragrance, Tasting and Garden Ornamentation  
Debi Hogan
- 1:00 Sustaining Your Garden with Tough, Hardy Plants that Offer Big Seasonal Impact  
Deborah Swanson
- 1:30 Creative Arrangements from the Spring Garden with a Japanese Flair  
Gilbert Moore
- 2:00 Planning and Planting a Hosta Garden  
Andy Balon and Warren Leach
- 2:30 Constructing a Path through the Hosta Garden  
Andy Balon and Warren Leach
- 3:00 Design Tour of the Gardens of Tranquil Lake Nursery  
Warren Leach

The Spring Garden Festival is free and open to the public. Bring a picnic lunch and lawn chair and plan to spend the whole day in the gardens and learning new techniques that will keep your own garden in glorious bloom all summer long. We'll provide cold drinks. For descriptions of each talk visit [www.tranquil-lake.com](http://www.tranquil-lake.com).

## Visit our Website

We invite you to visit the Tranquil Lake Nursery website for a full listing of the Siberian Iris, Japanese Iris and Daylilies that are available this year. Each iris and daylily variety is accompanied by a description of the flower and the height and characteristics of the plant. A picture is also provided for most varieties. You will also find a **downloadable catalog of our most popular daylilies and iris**. Many specialized list of daylilies by color, height, flower size and more; copies of the plant articles from past newsletters and information on garden lectures and events is also available. Check out these ever updated resources at [www.tranquil-lake.com](http://www.tranquil-lake.com).

### **\*\* On-Line Newsletter \*\***

Tranquil Lake Nursery has gone green with our newsletter. We invite you to share this e-newsletter with friends. To join our e-list, send your request to [tranquil-lake@earthlink.net](mailto:tranquil-lake@earthlink.net) and we'll sign you up.

## Garden Design Days

Does your garden need design finesse? Are you looking for planting solutions for a problem garden area? Or, do you just need to decide where to start?

On **May 14<sup>th</sup>** and **June 4<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., you can register for a half hour special garden consultation with our own talented horticulturist and garden designer **Warren Leach** and he will help you come up with a planting design solutions. Bring photos of your garden area and rough measurements of your site. Warren will sketch out solutions and provide a suggested plant list.

Preregistration is required and must be accompanied by a **\$50 registration fee**. This fee is **redeemable for plants on the day of the consult**. Consultation slots will be filled on a first call - first serve basis, so call and reserve your design time now.

## Visiting the Nursery

Tranquil Lake Nursery is open 7 days a week from 10 a.m. to 5. p.m., from April 25 through to the end of July. We will set our late Summer and Fall hours later this summer. The nursery is closed on Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day.

**Directions:** Tranquil Lake Nursery is located just north of Route 44 in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, about 8 miles east of Providence, Rhode Island. If you are traveling **east on Route 44**, take a left turn onto River Street immediately after you pass Winthrop Commons and the Route 44 Recreation Center. Continue on River Street across Broad Street. The nursery is the fourth driveway on the right. If you are traveling **west on Route 44**, travel 1.4 miles past the intersection of Route 118 and Route 44. You will pass the Rehoboth Schools on the right. Make the next right turn onto Danforth Street. Then take the first left on River Street. Tranquil Lake Nursery is the fourth driveway on the left.

Rehoboth, MA 02769  
45 River Street  
Tranquil Lake Nursery

